OMRI DAILY DIGEST
No. 26, 6 February 1995

CHECHENS DOWN RUSSIAN FIGHTER PLANE. On 3 February, Russian troops succeeded in breaking through Chechen lines at Goiti, southeast of Grozny, and secured control of one of the last remaining roads out of the city, Reuters reported. Air attacks on Grozny and on Argun, to the east, continued on 3 and 4 February. On 4 February Chechen militants shot down a Russian SU-25 fighter plane, killing the pilot. Heavy artillery bombardment of Grozny resumed in the afternoon of 5 February, after a lull, and Russian forces moved to strengthen control over districts south of Grozny. Russian forces were also reported to be advancing on Grozny from the west. On 4 February, the Chechen opposition Provisional Council issued a statement condemning "barbaric, senseless, and cruel" bombardments of civilian areas, Reuters reported. The next day, the Russian government press service alleged that Dudaev's supporters were preparing for a massacre of Russians in Grozny on 20-23 February to mark the anniversary of the Chechen population's mass deportation in 1944. -- Liz Fuller, OMRI, Inc.

G7 SAYS CHECHNYA THREATENS RUSSIAN ECONOMIC REFORMS. The Group of Seven major industrialized countries believes the Chechen operation's cost threatens Russian economic stabilization, Reuters reported on 4 February. Although deploring the excessive use of force, G7 foreign ministers said they would still invite President Boris Yeltsin to the group's Halifax summit in June. German Finance Minister Theo Waigel said, "The financial impact of the war in Chechnya threatens to burst the Russian budget [and] because of that, the outlook for a stabilization of Russia's economy will be further endangered." Russian officials are expected to attend the next meeting of G7 finance ministers in Washington this April to discuss the economic situation. -- Michael Mihalka, OMRI, Inc.

RUSSIA ACCEPTS OSCE CALL FOR IMMEDIATE CEASE-FIRE IN CHECHNYA. The Russian delegation agreed on 3 February to an Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in Chechnya and condemning the "disproportionate use of force by the Russian Armed Forces." An OSCE official told OMRI the Russian action is "quite remarkable," and stressed it showed Russia is taking the organization seriously. The Russian delegation initially did not accept the document on 2 February, as it waited for instructions from Moscow, AFP reported. -- Michael Mihalka, OMRI, Inc.

SON OF DUMA COMMISSIONER ON CHECHNYA WOUNDED. Independent TV station director Sergei Govorukhin was hospitalized after being wounded in Grozny on 3 February. The next day, Nezavisimaya gazeta noted that Govorukhin was shot while filming a documentary on the Chechen war in the Western part of the city, which is under Russian control. Russian TV's "Vesti" claimed the Russian military had deliberately fired at the journalist. Sergei's father, prominent film director Stanislav Govorukhin, is the chairman of a commission set up last month by the State Duma to find out which officials are responsible for the Chechen conflict and why the Russian army performed so poorly. During his visit to Lipetsk earlier last week, Yeltsin called Govorukhin's commission "unconstitutional." -- Julia Wishnevsky, OMRI, Inc.